

R 072015Z FEB 92
FM USINT HAVANA
TO AMEMBASSY MADRID
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1421
USMISSION GENEVA 1807/
USIA WASHDC 5930
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3951
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA
CCGDSEVEN MIAMI FL
USLO CARIBBEAN
COMNAVBASE GUANTANAMO BAY
FBIS KEY WEST

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 00781

USIA FOR AR, P/G, B/CR; DEPT FOR ARA/CCA;
ROME ALSO FOR VATICAN; CINCLANT FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CU](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN AND CASTRO

REF: MABRID 1246

1. (C) USINT APPRECIATES EMBASSY MADRID'S EXCELLENT REPORT ON SPAIN'S GROWING DISENCHANTMENT WITH FIDEL CASTRO. WE FOLLOW THE SPANISH-CUBAN RELATIONSHIP AS CLOSELY AS WE CAN FROM HAVANA, AND OUR INFORMATION TRACKS WELL WITH THAT IN REFTEL. WE OFFER A COUPLE OF THOUGHTS FROM THE HAVANA PERSPECTIVE.

2. (C) MORE THAN MOST, THE SPANIARDS HAVE INDULGED IN WISHFUL THINKING ABOUT FIDEL CASTRO. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF HIS GALICIAN ROOTS, PERHAPBECAUSE OF HIS POWERFUL PERSONALITY, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF HIS CAREFULLY CULTIVATED ROMANTIC IMAGE AS THE CARIBBEAN DAVID FACING THE NORTH AMERICAN GOLIATH, THEY HAVE TENDED TO GIVE HIM THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT. THEY ALSO THOUGHT THEY HAD SPECIAL INFLUENCE. IF THEY EVER DID, THEY NO LONGER HAVE. CASTRO HAS NOW SHOWN THAT HE CAN BE AS DISMISSIVE OF FELIPE GONZALEZ AS HE CAN OF ANYONE ELSE WHO OFFERS HIM ADVISE HE DOES NOT LIKE.

3. (C) THE SPANIARDS -- AND FOR THAT MATTER MOST WEST EUROPEANS -- HAVE BEEN SLOW TO RECOGNIZE CASTRO FOR WHAT HE IS: A SOMETIMES CHARMING BUT ALWAYS RUTHLESS DICTATOR. NOW THAT THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO RATIONALIZE HIS EGREGIOUS BEHAVIOR (SUCH AS THE CURRENT CRACKDOWN ON HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS) THEY SEEM TO BE MORE LIKELY TO OVERREACT TO IT. THEY TEND TO SEE THE CURRENT SITUATION IN MORE APOCALYPTIC TERMS THAN THEY MIGHT HAVE IF THEIR VISION HD NOT BEEN CLOUDED BY ROMANTICISM AND WISHFUL THINKING FOR THREE DECADES. MOREOVER, MADRID'S PESSIMISM PROBABLY ALSO REFLECTS THAT OF SPANISH EMBASSY PERSONNEL HERE WHO SEEM TO TAKE CASTRO'S INTRANSIGENCE AS A PERSONAL AFFRONT. THEY HAVE ALSO BEEN DISILLUSIONED BY THE RECENT HARDLINE PRONOUNCEMENTS OF PCC IDEOLOGY CHIEF CARLOS ALDANA TO WHOM THEY HAD EARLIER IMPUTED THE ROLE OF INNER CIRCLE LIBERAL.

4. (C) ALL OF THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST THAT THE CASTRO REGIME IS NOT IN CRISIS. AND IT IS VERY POSSIBLE, EVEN LIKELY THAT CHANGE, WHEN IT COMES, WILL BE VIOLENT. HOWEVER WE BELIEVE THAT THE CUBAN REALITY HAS NOT CHANGED AS MUCH AS THE SPANISH PERCEPTION OF IT.

5. (C) FINALLY, WITH REGARD TO WHETHER OR NOT CASTRO WILL BE INVITED TO THE SEVILLE SUMMIT, MWE HAVE SEEN PRESS REPORTS IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS QUOTING FELIPE

GONZALEZ TO THE EFFECT THAT AS LONG AS HE WAS ISSUING THE INVITATIONS, CASTRO WOULD GET ONE. THAT STATEMENT, IF ACCURATELY REPORTED WOULD SEEM TO OVERTAKE THE SUGGESTION IN PARAGRAPH 11 OF REFTTEL THAT THE GOS MIGHT USE THE INVITATION FOR LEVERAGE.

FLANIGAN